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RDG 4402

Johnson

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**Novel Study:**

*The Westing Game* written by Ellen Raskin in 1978 is a mysterious novel and a one of a kind thriller. The story opens with Mr. Barney Northrup inviting six families to become residents at Sunset Towers Apartments. After everyone has moved in, you have a great line up of characters: Jake, Grace, Angela and Turtle Wexler, George, Catherine, Theo and Chris Theodorakis, Flora Baumbach, Sydelle Pulaski, James, Sun Lin, and Doug Hoo, Judge Ford, Berthe Erica Crow, Denton Deere and Sandy McSouthers. Soon after everyone has finally settled in, the body of Sam Westing has been found in his abandoned house.

Sixteen residents of Sunset Towers are requested to hear the reading of Sam Westing’s Will. Here the characters find out that they are related and are heirs to Sam Westing’s Fortune. Shocked, the heirs listen carefully as Mr. Westing’s Will announces that he was murdered and that one of them is guilty of the crime! He invites them to “play” the Westing Game and explains the rules: Sixteen players will be divided into eight pairs. Each pair will receive $10,000 and one set of clues (no sets of clues are the same). If any player drops out, their partner must leave the game and return the money. Players will be given two days notice of the next session where they may give one answer of who they think the killer is. The “object” of the game is to WIN! At the end of the Will, Mr. Westing tells the heirs to beware because some of them are not who they really say they are and to remember “It’s not what you have; it’s what you don’t have that counts.” The heirs are paired as follows: Madame Hoo and Jake Wexler; Turtle Wexler and Flora Baumbach; Chris Theodorakis and Denton Deere; Sandy McSouthers and Judge Ford; Grace Wexler and James Hoo; Berthe Erica Crow and Otis Amber; Theo Theodorakis and Doug Hoo; and finally Sydelle Pulaski and Angela Wexler.

The pairs must work together while continuously looking over their shoulders to find out who the murderer really is. This book has more twists and turns behind every page and is a great thrill ride. I truly enjoyed reading this book and think it is a great read for students. This book can help students understand the power of team work and critical thinking skills. The story can be related to that of a scavenger hunt or treasure hunt game. Being able to relate this to my students would be very important, because I think that would help them to want to continue reading.

**Scaffold Reading Experience (SRE) Framework**

**Pre-Reading Activities:**

1. Pre Teaching Vocabulary
   * I will pre-teach vocabulary words that may be difficult for my students to understand.
2. Relating the Reading to Student’s Lives
   * I will describe how the book is similar to the game of “Clue” as well as a scavenger hunt. I will allow my students to play through both so they can understand the elements and goals of the book.
3. Considering Literary Elements – Differentiated
   * Discussing further about characters and giving specifics on how to keep up with the specific details of each character.

**During Reading Activities:**

1. Reading to the Students
   * I will read the first six pages, introducing chapter one and setting the tone of the novel.
2. Silent Reading
   * Skilled readers will read through the next five chapters independently.
3. Reading to the Students – Differentiated
   * In a smaller group with my students that are lower level readers, I will continue to read with them through to chapter six.
4. Traditional Study Activities
   * I will have my students take notes on characters, setting changes, and listing how the changes affect the story.

**Post Reading Activities:**

1. Discussion
   * Grouping students into small groups and having them talk about their interpretations of the book. Students will compare and contrast each other’s ideas.
2. Questioning
   * Ask students why they think the story ended the way it did. Also ask students if the circumstances change, how the ending would differ.
3. Drama
   * Have the students pick a character and put on a small skit about the role that character played throughout the story.
4. Writing
   * I will ask my students to write: “What do you think the real purpose of Sam Westing “Game” was? How does this make you feel about the story? Would you do the same if you were Sam Westing?”